

2 April 1964

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**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT: Ideas for Discussion on NRO Problems for the Baker Panel and the Clifford Board**

1. We are not here to discuss a failure. On the contrary, the reconnaissance effort has been a success. Programs carried on by the NRO, CIA and the Air Force have produced a wealth of useful intelligence. For example:

a. Manned aircraft flights.

(1) 675 high, 162 low level flights over Cuba since 1962 conducted by the Air Force.

(2) 17 successful flights over China, North Vietnam, North Korea since January 1963 conducted by the Chinese Nationalists under CIA direction.

(3) 27 flights over North Vietnam since January 1963 conducted by CIA.

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(6) 14 flights over South Vietnam by CIA and 45 by SAC.

b. CORONA flights.

(1) Since January 1963 there have been 5 CORONA M flights and 3 CORONA J flights which have been successful. There also have been 4 failures (the number of failures is disconcerting but not necessarily out of range because of the complexity of the operation). Since January 1963 57 million + square miles and about 85% of the Soviet Union have been photographed with useful photography at least once and in some instances several times.

(2) 7 million square miles and about 50% of Communist China have been photographed with useful photography.

(3) All 18 ICBM complexes have been photographed and most of the known 727 IRBM sites have been photographed since January 1963 reaffirming the locations, the expansions, the hardening and the developments.

(4) Tyura Tam and Kaputsin Yar have been kept under surveillance and have been photographed 20 times each.

(5) The CORONA system has been vastly improved, resolution is better, stereo has been perfected, dependability is considered improved (despite failures), progress is being made in the direction of improving the system as a result of work and recommendations of the Purcell Panel and the Drell Committee and concentrated effort by responsible people in NRO, CIA, the Air Force, the President's Scientific Advisory Board, etc.

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**c. GAMBIT flights.**

(1) During the year 6 GAMBITS have been fired. Of these, 1 was a failure, 4 have been labeled developmental successes and the last provided substantial substantive coverage.

(2) Resolution is giving us more knowledge of objects of interest in the Soviet Union.

(3) With continual perfecting of this system we can expect a substantial contribution to our intelligence inventory.

2. The problem therefore is not to redress a past failure. The problem is to eliminate the conflicts, misunderstandings, personality differences and organizational ambiguities which continue to plague the program and threaten its future. These result largely from poorly defined interagency responsibilities. The solution lies in the clear establishment of certain basic policies and principles. If these are recognized, it will be easy to formulate whatever written agreement (if any) is necessary to govern the activities of the agencies necessarily involved in the program.

3. The essential principles and policies appear to me essentially as follows:

a. USIB. The purpose of reconnaissance is to provide and confirm intelligence. Therefore the role of the DCI and USIB in establishing requirements for coverage, scheduling of aircraft and satellite flights and delivery of photography for readout by NPIC must be paramount. It should be noted that addition of the Director, NRO as a

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[redacted]

member of USIB for reconnaissance matters which was initiated 23 September 1963 has improved the competence of USIB to deal with these matters.

Recommendation. The clear responsibility of the DCI and USIB for determining the amount and character of coverage desired should be recognized.

(b) Overflights with Manned Aircraft. There must be a clear understanding with respect to responsibility for covert photographic reconnaissance with manned aircraft. Heretofore CIA has been held responsible for overflights of Communist territory and covert overflights of other territory. Consideration should be given to whether this arrangement should continue or whether responsibility should be transferred to the Air Force. This is particularly important because the maintenance of the organization necessary to direct and control this effort, both in terms of technical facilities and in terms of manpower and dollar costs, is expensive and burdensome. [redacted]

*High altitude*

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[redacted]

Recommendation. The present arrangement should be continued and an appropriate directive issued confirming CIA's authority.

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**c. Development of New Systems.** There should be agreement that it is in the best interest of the U.S. to have two organizations, rather than one, involved in research and development on future systems. This seems desirable in order to make the most of the different potentialities and capabilities of the Air Force and of CIA in this field. If, however, it is the desire of the President to have responsibility for research and development on future systems centralized in one organization (either CIA or the Air Force), this should be specifically stated. One or the other (presumably CIA) should then be phased out.

**Recommendation:** Both CIA and the Air Force should continue to perform research and development for new systems. Responsibility should be allocated for development of particular systems by the DCI and the Secretary of Defense.

**d. Satellite Operations.** Once a satellite system is proven a single authority should be operationally responsible for individual flights. Such an authority should have control over boosters and launching and recovery activities and should be responsible for ensuring that individual operations are responsive to the requirements and guidance of USIB. This responsibility should and can be distinguished from the responsibility for the procurement of payloads and for effecting improvements in existing systems. In this regard CIA has been responsible for procurement and development for CORONA payloads and should remain responsible for further modification and improvement in this program. The Air Force, on the other hand, has developed GAMBIT and should be charged with responsibility for its development and improvement. This involves a certain interrelationship between the operating authority

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on the one hand and agencies responsible for the procurement and development of payloads on the other, but this necessary interface should not be a confusing problem.

Recommendation. A single operational authority should be responsible for the operational performance of proven satellite operations.

(e) NRO. Whether the NRO should operate as a line organization with command authority over components of the Defense Department is a matter to be decided by the Secretary of Defense. If the NRO continues to function as a line organization within the Defense Department, it should not exercise direct control over the activities and personnel of subordinate components of CIA. To the extent that CIA continues to perform tasks for the NRO, programs assigned to the CIA must be under CIA management and be administered through the CIA line of command.

Recommendation. Responsibilities should be allocated on a program basis.

(f) Funding. Funds should be allocated in an amount commensurate with the estimated cost of programs. Allocations of funds to CIA to finance programs for which CIA is responsible should be adequate to cover obligations contemplated for the program during the fiscal year and should either be included in the CIA budget or be allocated in bulk at the beginning of the fiscal year (subject to reasonable reprogramming).

Recommendation. Funds should be allocated in bulk on a program basis.

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(g) Confidential Funds. Tasks assigned to CIA should be funded under procedures which afford the DCI appropriate budgetary and fiscal control. In this connection, it should be noted that an important element of the program is the DCI's authority to certify the expenditure of funds for confidential purposes. This is an important element of the so-called "black" contracting procedure and the DCI's authority in this respect should be preserved and his responsibility recognized.

Recommendation. The DCI's responsibility for funds expended under his authority should be recognized and protected.

(h) Costs. All requirements for new systems must be carefully reviewed to determine whether their contribution to intelligence justifies their cost. Questions such as the resolution desirable for both general search and spot surveillance, the need for new and improved sensors, synchronous satellites and quick readout should be reviewed from the point of view of the contribution which they make to the intelligence effort. The need for such systems from an intelligence point of view should be carefully assessed before the enormous expense of development, testing and production is authorized.

Recommendation. Procedures should be established for review of the necessity for new systems from an intelligence point of view before development and testing is authorized.

*Distribution (not taken from #2 (Bross's copy))*

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JOHN A. McCONE  
Director

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

February 26, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BERRY  
MR. JOHN A. MCCONE  
MR. U. ALEXIS JOHNSON

In planning operations for South Viet Nam and environs, I find that there is some vagueness of definition of the areas to be allowed to SAC unsanitized aircraft. I have discussed this matter with Mr. Vance. He has asked me to propose and circulate a suggested definition, this is given below. He will be able to discuss this definition with you this afternoon.

It is proposed that unsanitized B-2 aircraft be limited to overflight of the area included below:

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1. South Viet Nam;
2. That part of North Viet Nam which is south of the 21st parallel;
3. That part of Laos which is south of the 21st parallel, except that penetration shall not be greater than 60 miles from the eastern border;
4. That part of Cambodia which is not more than 60 miles from South Viet Nam.

A sketch is shown on the attached map.



BROCKWAY McMILLAN  
Director  
National Reconnaissance Office

Attachment

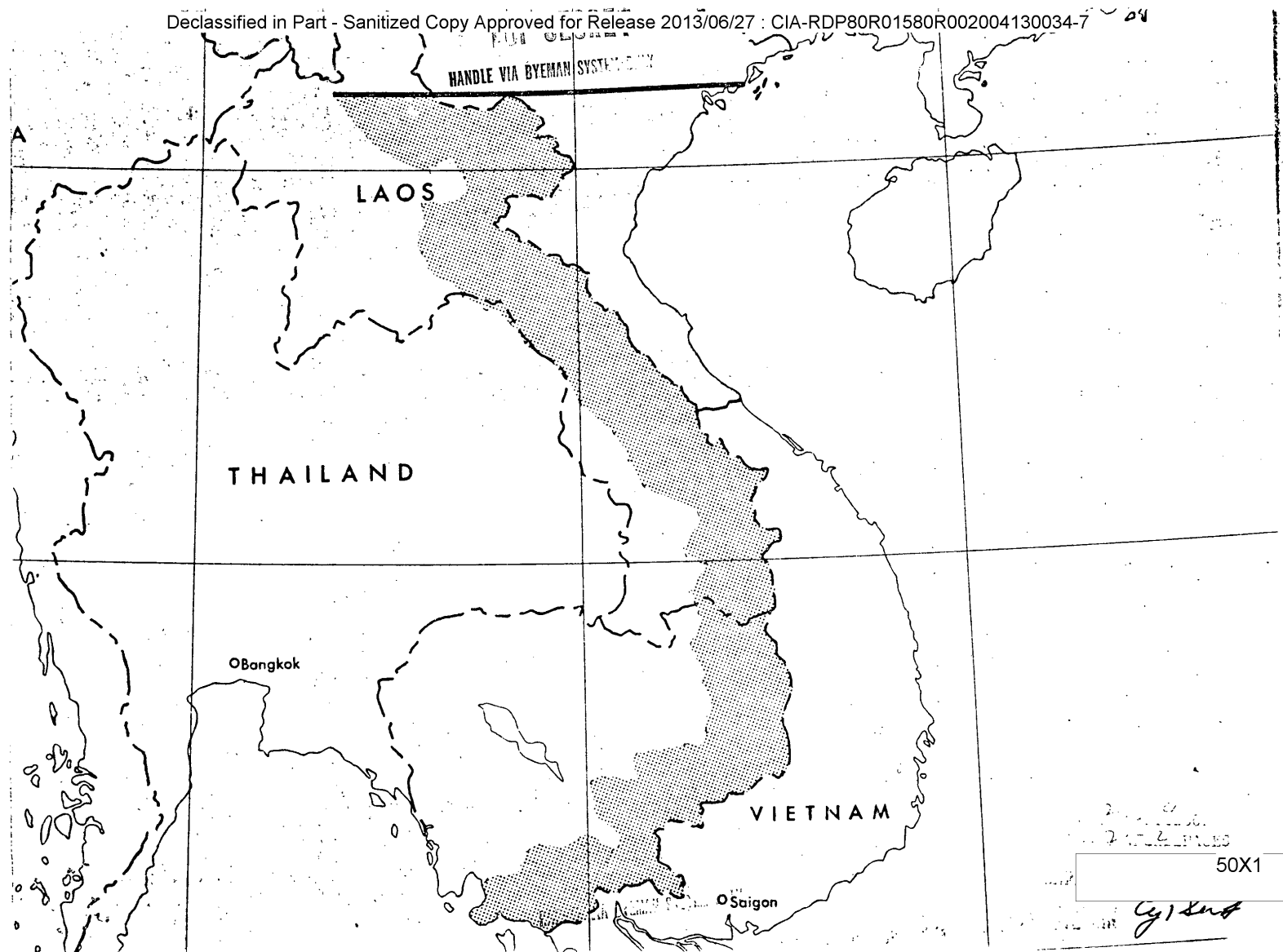
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